

**Embargoed till 15 August 2008
Press Release**

**Lim Family Supports Singapore Art Museum
With Donation of Xu Beihong's Important Artwork
15 August 2008**



Portrait of Lim Loh
Xu Beihong
1927

(15 August 2008) Singapore Art Museum is delighted to announce the donation of Xu Beihong's important artwork by the Lim family. This donation is made possible through the generosity of the Lim Family. The work, "Portrait of Lim Loh", is now featured in *Xu Beihong in Nanyang* exhibition, and will significantly enhance the permanent collection of the Singapore Art Museum. The donation ceremony will be officiated by the Guest of Honour, Dr Lee Boon Yang, Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts on 15 August at 11 am at SAM Glass Hall.

Xu Beihong (1895 – 1953) is one of the most seminal figures in the history of modern Chinese painting. He was one of the first to articulate the need for artistic expressions that reflected a new modern China at the beginning of the twentieth century. As one of the earliest Chinese artists to be trained in Europe, he was instrumental in promoting the use of scientific realism and the direct study of rejuvenating ink painting.

In 1927, Xu was commissioned to paint the portrait of Lim Chee Gee, also known as Lim Loh. A renowned business figure in brick and food production in Singapore, Lim Loh was the father of famous Singapore war-time hero Lim Bo Seng (1909-1944) who died during the anti-Japanese activities in World War II.

Annex A: About Donation Ceremony and Lim Family

Donation Artwork: *Portrait of Lim Loh* by Xu Beihong

Donor: Lim family

Guest of Honour: Dr Lee Boon Yang

Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts

Date and Time: 11 am, 15 August 2008

Venue: Glass Hall, Singapore Art Museum

Programme:

- 11 00 am Arrival of Guests
- 11 30 am Arrival of Guest of Honour
- 11 35 am Welcome Address and Speeches
- 11 50 am Unveiling of Donation Work
- 12 00 pm Reception

Significance of Ceremony Date

The donation ceremony will be held on 15 August, the official date of Japanese surrender to the Allies in World War II, in honour of Lim Bo Seng (1909-1944), the wartime hero of Lim family.

About Lim Loh

Lim Chee Gee, known to many as Towkay Lim Loh, played an important role in Singapore's construction scene during the first part of the 20th century.

Lim was a well known business figure in the brick and food production business in Singapore. He was involved in the building of many significant structures that helped shaped the early development of the central districts of Singapore, such as the Victoria Memorial Hall, the Parliament House and Goodwood Hotel. Lim was also a prominent businessman in other areas. He ran a successful brick-making business, later ventured into the area of rubber-tapping, and established a biscuit factory.

History of Lim family

Mr Lim Chee Gee, also known as Lim Loh (*Lin Zhiyi* or *Lin Lu*), was born in Nan'an, China. Lim was a well-known businessman, and he ran successful businesses in brick and biscuit manufacturing in Singapore. He is better known as the father of war hero Lim Bo Seng.

Lim Bo Seng (1909-1944), the eleventh child of Lim Loh, is known as the war hero during the World War II. After the Japanese invasion in China in 1937, Lim joined the Overseas Chinese Mobilisation Council, a volunteer group set up by the philanthropist Tan Kah Kee, to organize relief efforts for the Chinese in China. During World War II, Lim then led anti-Japanese resistance movement, and was killed by the Japanese after being captured in Malaya in 1944.

Annex C: Biography of Xu Beihong

Xu Beihong (1895 – 1953) is one of the most seminal figures in the history of modern Chinese painting. He was one of the first to articulate the need for artistic expressions that reflected a new modern China at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Between 1919 and 1942, Xu transited through Nanyang seven times. After the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, Xu travelled to Southeast Asia to raise funds for the resistance movement, through the sale of his paintings.

In January 1939, Xu brought works to Singapore to raise funds. The show, which Huang Manshi helped to arrange, was held at Victoria Memorial Hall and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. It was a success with many distinguished guests attending the opening, and 171 works were shown with a sum of \$15,398 raised. Apart from his exhibition, Xu also gave talks to schools and art societies in Singapore, and painted numerous works including the portrait of Sir Thomas Shenton, Governor of Singapore.

In late 1939, Xu received an invitation from Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), President of the Sino-Indian Cultural Society, to hold exhibitions in India and give talks. Xu left for India and held his first show at Tagore's university Visva Bharati in Santiniketan in December 1939.

Annex D: About Singapore Art Museum

Opened in January 1996, the mission of the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) is to preserve and present the art histories and contemporary art practices of Singapore and the Southeast Asian region. To date, SAM has amassed the world's largest public collection of modern and contemporary Southeast Asian artworks with a growing component in international contemporary art. The museum has presented shows covering both local and international art practices, traditional and cutting edge art expressions. Through strategic alliances with international arts and cultural institutions, SAM has been facilitating visual arts education, exchange, research and development within the region and internationally. Through forging collaborative partnerships and staging innovative programmes to engage different audiences, SAM aims to contribute to an enlarged role in the regional visual arts community and Asian art museology, as well as facilitating developments in art as well as the art sector in Singapore.